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### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)**

**(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)**

#### **DA pushes Tawi-Tawi, S'gani fishery projects**

**(Source: Manila Bulletin Internet Edition – 9/12/05)**

**BONGAO, Tawi-Tawi – The Department of Agriculture (DA) has allotted R15 million for two major fishery projects here and in Sarangani province.**

Both projects are aimed boosting the country's food security program of the country, Tawi-Tawi Governor Sadikul Sahali said yesterday.

Sahali added that DA Secretary Domingo Panganiban earmarked R10 million for the construction of multi-species hatchery farm in this province and another R5 million for the fish shelter "payao" project in Sarangani.

He explained that Mindanao has huge potentials in both agriculture and fisheries and needs the attention of the DA to improve its existing projects in both economic sectors.

A memorandum of agreement (MoA) were recently signed by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) director Malcolm Sarmiento, Gov. Sahali and Pertonilio Buendia, general manger of the South East Asia and Fisheries Authority-Aquaculture Department (SEAFDEC-AQD) for the hatchery project in this province.

Sarangani Governor Rene Miguel Dominguez also signed the MoA for the fish shelter project in his province.

Panganiban and Dr. Stanley Swerdtoff, advisor of the SAFE project of the Growth with Equity in Mndanao (GEM) Program of the USAID for the hatchery project, also signed the MoA as witnesses.

BFAR, which is under the DA, is mandated under the law to render assistance by way of technology transfer to fisherfolk. The bureau has been in the forefront of projects meant to generate employment and provide higher incomes to fishermen.

Sahali said DA prefers the province to be the site of the hatchery farm for high grade species of fish because of its vast reservoir or marine resources, pristine waters and favorable weather conditions.

The province ranks first in the country in seaweeds production and has been considered as a major source of high valued fish products in southern Philippines.

SEAFDEC-AQD, a regional treaty organization based in Iloilo, will provide the modern aquaculture technology as well as research and development, for the multi-species hatchery project.

Meanwhile, BFAR and provincial officials also urged fishermen here to use hook and line to catch fish and discouraged them from using fine mesh nets that also snare small fish along with the mature ones.

Sarangani is a major source of tuna in the country today.

It has been targeted by government as the focus of its cooperative development program since many fishermen in the province are being collectively organized as responsible hook and line practitioners.